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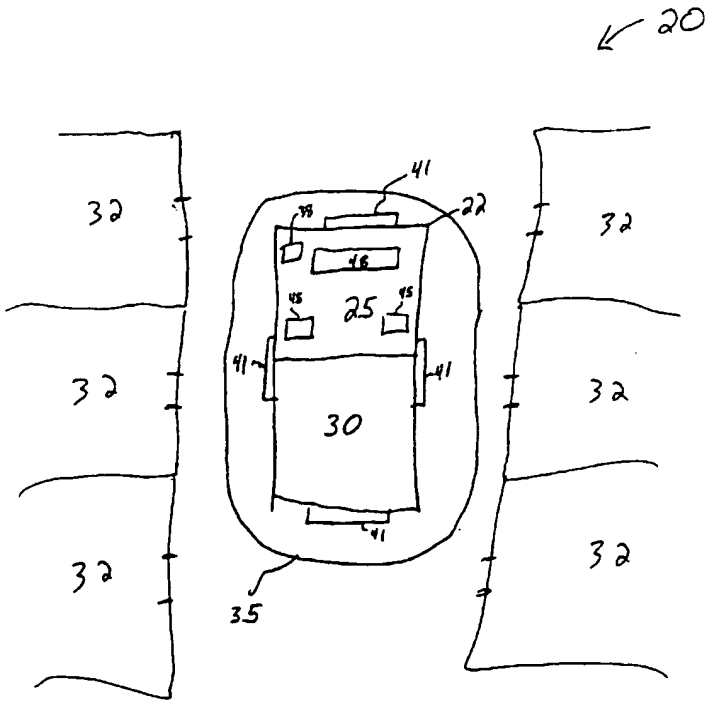

(57) Abstract: Interactive system for conducting business, having a satellite shop located in an area of high pedestrian traffic, a sensory magnet zone having at least one stimulus to attract consumers to the satellite shop, and interactive zone of the satellite shop having a consumer interface configured to facilitate exchange of product-related information and a product testing zone, and a retail zone within the satellite shop having products available for purchase. Method for interacting with a consumer to provide product-related information including the steps of locally attracting the consumer to a satellite shop, establishing an interaction with the consumer via a product-related interface, providing product-related information to the consumer via the product-related interface, providing the consumer an opportunity to test at least one product, recording a list of products tested by the consumer in a data store, offering to the consumer one or more products for purchase, and obtaining feedback from the consumer regarding the tested and purchased products.

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AN INTERACTIVE SYSTEM FOR CONDUCTING BUSINESS AND METHOD FOR THE INTERACTIVE DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION RELATING TO PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to conducting business and managing customer interactions related to products and services, and more specifically to a unique method and system for interacting with a consumer to provide information relating to products and services in a satellite shop.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Conventional stores have in the past have attempted to encourage a consumer to purchase a product through the use of advertising, promotions and testing of the products. For example, many food manufacturers sample their products in grocery stores to allow the consumer to test their product. Similarly, many beauty care products have tester samples available for the consumer to sample the product and determine how the products works for them. However, the testing stations are typically limited to only a few products.

More recently, some beauty care companies have installed computers at the point of sale location. The computers allow the consumer to input various personal data and the computer makes a recommendation towards the type of product for the consumer to purchase. Typically, the computer stores the consumer's personal data in a database and the consumer and/or administrative users can later access this data. This data is useful to companies to improve and create new products.

Today, there is a need to combine the testing stations and personal databases in an exciting new way to interactively distribute and collect information. In addition, there is a need for an exciting new way for consumers to test products and to encourage the purchase of the tested products.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide novel methods and systems for the interactive exchange and distribution of information relating to products and services to

consumers which overcome one or more disadvantages of the prior art. It is another object of the invention to provide novel methods and apparatus for providing an interactive system for conducting business by utilizing a unique interactive model for transferring product information. These and additional objects and advantages are provided by the methods and systems for conducting business in the interactive distribution of information relating to products and services of the present invention.

One aspect of the present invention is the interactive system for conducting business. In a preferred embodiment, the system comprises a satellite shop located in an area of high pedestrian traffic, a sensory magnet zone comprising at least one stimulus to attract consumers to the satellite shop; and an interactive zone of the satellite shop comprising a product testing zone and a consumer interface configured to facilitate the exchange of product-related information; and a retail zone within the satellite shop comprising products available for purchase.

Another aspect of the present invention is the method of interacting with the consumer to provide product-related information. In a preferred application, the method comprises the steps of locally attracting the consumer to a satellite shop; establishing an interaction with a consumer via a product-related interface; providing product-related information to the consumer via the product-related interface; providing the consumer an opportunity to test at least one product; recording a list of products tested by the consumer in a data store; offering to the consumer one or more products for purchase; and obtaining feedback from the consumer regarding the products purchased and tested.

Another aspect of the present invention is the store for interactive product testing and purchasing. In a preferred embodiment, the store comprises a store shell, wherein the store shell comprises an inner area and an outer area, and further wherein the store shell is substantially U-shaped; a sensory magnet zone, wherein the sensory magnet zone is located adjacent the outer area of the store shell and is configured to attract potential customers into the inner area of the store shell; an interactive zone, wherein the interactive zone is located within the inner area of the store shell and adjacent the sensory magnet zone; and a retail zone, wherein the retail zone is located within the inner area of the store shell.

Still other objects, advantages and novel features of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description, which is simply, by way of illustration, various modes contemplated for carrying out the invention. As will be realized, the

invention is capable of other different obvious aspects all without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the drawings and descriptions are illustrative in nature and not restrictive.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

While the specification concludes what claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the present invention, it is believed that the same will be understand from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a schematic illustration of an exemplary interactive system for conducting business according to the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a schematic illustration of the interaction zone of the interactive system depicted in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 depicts a flowchart of a method of interacting with a consumer to provide product-related information according to the present invention;

Fig. 4 depicts an illustration of an exemplary product interface of the present invention;

Fig. 5 depicts an illustration of an exemplary e-kiosk of the present invention;

Fig. 6 is a schematic illustration of an interactive system for conducting business according to the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a schematic illustration of an exemplary client/server network embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 8 depicts an illustration of an exemplary product interface of the present invention;

Fig. 9 depicts an illustration of an exemplary product interface of the present invention; and

Fig. 10 is a schematic illustration of an interactive system for conducting business according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Reference will now be made in detail to various embodiments of the invention, various examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings, wherein like numerals indicate corresponding elements throughout the views. As used herein, the term "product" will generally be interchangeably used with the term "service," as the present invention is applicable to all kinds of products and services that can be "tested" and/or observed.

One embodiment of the present invention is schematically illustrated in Figure 1 which depicts an interactive system 20 for conducting business relating to products or services in accordance with one aspect of the present invention. The interactive system 20 is shown as preferably comprising a satellite shop 22, a sensory magnet zone 35, an interactive zone 25, and a retail zone 30 as will be further described herein. The satellite shop 22, for example, would preferably be located in an area of high pedestrian traffic. For example, one or more walk-in shops 32, town square, college campus, etc. Walk-in shops are typically stores, businesses or shops in malls or plazas in which the store is physically part of the structure of the shopping mall or plaza. A "satellite shop" as used herein, will connote an interactive facility typically located adjacent to (e.g., in an aisle way between entrances) one or more walk-in shops. Preferably, the satellite shop is located in a high consumer traffic area of the shopping mall or plaza. In another embodiment, the satellite shop may be located adjacent a corresponding walk-in shop, in which the products and services of the satellite shop and walk-in shop are targeted to similar consumer groups (i.e., teens, wherein the satellite shop comprises beauty care products and the walk-in shop comprises teen clothing). A satellite shop might be at least partially within one or more walk-in shops, or may be simply adjacent to one or more selected "planet" walk-in businesses.

The sensory magnet zone 35, would preferably comprise at least one stimulus (such as a video monitor) to attract consumers to the satellite shop 22. It is contemplated that the sensory magnet zone could comprise any item, presentation, display or other phenomenon capable of being sensed by people, and which can sense to tend to attract people to the satellite shop. The interactive zone 25 of the satellite shop 22, for example, might preferably comprise a consumer interface 45 configured to facilitate exchange of product-related information and a product testing zone 48. The retail zone 30 within the satellite shop 22 preferably comprises products available for purchase.

The interactive zone 25 preferably comprises one or more components designed to facilitate the presentation of information about available products and/or sensors, and the inquiry into and collection of information relating to the consumer's needs, preferences and expectations. Such components might, for example, be selected from the group consisting of a product tester 48, an e-kiosk 38, and an interactive workstation 45. One embodiment of the interactive zone 25 is schematically illustrated in Figure 2, where there is arranged a consumer interface (interactive workstation 45) and the product testing zone (tester bar 48) in communication with the data store (not shown). The data store is configured to store the consumer's interactions with the product

testing zone and consumer interface. The consumer interface 45 is preferably provided in communication, such as via token ring, Ethernet, telephone modem connection, radio or microwave connection, parallel cables, serial cables, telephone lines, universal serial bus "USB", Firewire, Bluetooth, fiber optics, infrared "IR", radio frequency "RF" and the like, or combinations thereof, with the data store and the product testing zone 48. Preferably, the consumer interface 45 is configured to allow the consumer to access the stored consumer's interactions from a remote location. For example, the consumer interface may comprise computer executable instructions to connect over a communications link and allow the consumer to access the interaction data . Such remote locations may included other satellite shops, e-kiosks, or access over the Internet. For example, the consumer might be shown a video detailing the consumer's experience at the tester zone comprising the consumer. In another embodiment, the consumer could retrieve a list of products tested to facilitate the consumer's choice in purchasing the correct product to achieve the desired results, as may have been achieved (or to avoid undesired results from unsuccessful tests) at the testing station.

In another embodiment, the interactive zone 25 is configured to collect information from the consumer or suggest products to the consumer. For example, the interactive zone may further comprise a data store, wherein the data store comprises executable instructions for recording the consumer's interaction with the interactive zone. This recorded interaction data is preferably accessible by the consumer and/or an administrative user of the enterprise. The consumer preferably can access the interaction data to relive/replay the interaction with the interactive zone. An administrative user potentially could utilize the interaction data to develop or improve products of the enterprise.

In one embodiment, the interactive zone 25 is configured to enable consumers to directly interact with consumers in other Interactive Systems (20) located around the world. Consumer would be able to send messages, share video images of themselves and speak to one another. In this configuration, the interactive zone 25 would enable consumers to place an Internet video call to online consumers around the world.

In yet another embodiment, the interactive zone 25 is configured to enable consumers to send video pictures of themselves and a personal message directly to the video monitors (41) at the current location of the interactive system 20 and at other interactive system locations around the world. Preferably, the interactive zone 25 is configured to enable consumers to send a video image of themselves and a message to people via e-mail. In another embodiment, the interactive zone is

configured to enable consumers to access sites popular to their particular consumer segment (e.g. Teen sites for teens).

The sensory magnet zone 35 preferably comprises at least one video monitor 41 with attendant audio. Preferably, the video monitor 41 displays product information, consumer-oriented information or entertainment information. Product information may include advertisements for the product or service, demonstrations or how-to tips to use the product or service, consumer testimonials and the like. For example, in the beauty care embodiment of the present invention, the video monitors 41 may display CoverGirl® beauty product television and magazine advertisements. Consumer-oriented information includes information targeted to potential customers about non-related products or services. For example, the information may include advertisements for other companies' products or services. Preferably, the entertainment information comprises music videos, music, TV shows, movies, movie previews, and the like. For some products or services, the initial sensory attraction might include entertainment appealing to general interests of targeted customer audience, which may have little or no direct relationship to the subject product or services. More preferably, the entertainment information is geared toward the targeted consumer group's preferences. In one embodiment, the sensory magnet zone 35 is located adjacent the interactive zone 25 and retail zone 30 of the satellite shop 22, so that people drawn to enjoy the entertainment or other sensory presentation are then placed in a close relationship with the interactive zone and tend to naturally be drawn to interact with the satellite shop.

In another embodiment, the interactive zone 25 preferably is configured to guide and/or otherwise assist a user in testing and using particular products, and to provide incentives to encourage testing and purchasing of products. These incentives may include coupons or discounts towards purchases of products tested by the consumer. For example, the data store may record a list of the products tested by the consumer. The consumer interface may comprise executable instructions which utilize a decision tree or algorithm to determine whether an incentive is available for offer to the consumer for one of the tested products or a related product. If an incentive is available, the consumer interface will appropriately inform the consumer of the available incentive and/or print the incentive for the consumer. Example incentives may include X percent off normal price, combination incentives for buying a combination of products, or the like.

In one embodiment, the instructions for proper use/testing of particularly applicable products might be shown on the screen or printed out at the tester station, and may contain one or

more incentives and an identification code such as a bar code or consumer identification number, which will identify the consumer when any purchase is made at the retail zone 30. This identification information is then transmitted to the data store 63 which is in communication with the server 60. The identification information can then be utilized by administrative users to determine which consumers and their corresponding interaction data made a purchase. This data allows administrative users to develop and improve products of the enterprise and in addition determine which components of the satellite shop enhance a purchase decision and which components do not enhance a purchase decision.

In another embodiment, the content of the sensory magnet zone 35 is received by the server 60 from the Internet 65, wherein the content is configured and selected at a remote location. For example, the content to be displayed on the video monitor could be selected and edited from a remote location and then sent over a communications link to the satellite shop. Commercial software such as Enterprise Broadcast Pro from Target Vision preferably can be utilized to deliver the video content of the sensory magnet zone. In another embodiment, the sensory magnet zone is queued to the amount of consumer traffic in the satellite shop. For example, the satellite shop may comprise a means to detect the number of people in the shop, or an administrative user could select which profile the sensory magnet zone should use (i.e., full-store, early morning, empty-store, evening, etc.).

Another key feature of the present invention is its overall method for interacting with the consumer to provide product and service related information as depicted in the flowchart of Figure 3. The method comprises the steps of: locally attracting the consumer to a satellite shop 22 (shown as step 70). Locally attracting refers to attracting the consumer who is already present in the shopping mall or plaza, but is not in the satellite shop. The step of locally attracting the consumer to a satellite shop 22 preferably comprises displaying product-oriented, consumer-oriented, or entertainment information at the sensory magnet zone (e.g., on video monitors 41), and might include an arrangement where the video monitors 41 are placed adjacent the satellite shop 22 to attract the consumer's attention towards the satellite shop 22. Preferably, the step of attracting the consumer further comprises additional audio and visual stimulus to attract the attention of the consumer to the satellite shop 22. Once the consumer's attention has been attracted to the satellite shop 22, the method further comprises establishing an interaction with the consumer via a product-related interface (72). The interaction can be established by the consumer touching a computer screen, swiping a magnetic stripe card through a card reader, selecting a product to test, or entering

their consumer identification data on an interactive terminal.. The product-related interface preferably comprises an interactive computer, Internet appliance or e-kiosk. For example, an exemplary interactive computer might preferably comprise a user interface establishing an interaction with the consumer which provides consumer-oriented and product-related information to the consumer (74). The consumer then is provided with the opportunity to test one or more products (76). Preferably, the satellite shop 22 comprises a tester station 48 where the consumer can actually test one or more products or services of the enterprise. In one embodiment, the tester station 48 is in communication with a data store and records the products tested by the consumer. This information stored in the data store can be used or later retrieved by the consumer or others to determine products tested by the consumer. After the consumer has tested a product, one or more products are offered to the consumer for testing and purchase (78). In one embodiment, the user interface will provide incentives, such as coupons or discounts, for one or more of the tested or related products. When the consumer purchases the product, feedback is preferably obtained from the consumer regarding the purchasing consumer's decision (80). For example, the consumer may be asked whether they used the interactive terminal, the tester station 48, the e-kiosk 38, or viewed one of the video monitors 41, and whether additional feedback data can also be gathered from the consumer through e-mail follow up or other communication means at a later time. In another embodiment, the feedback and interaction data can be utilized to target market consumers for a return visit (81).

Often computers telecommunicate with each other and share information, applications and/or services. Sometimes in this setting, the various computers are referred to as nodes, which is a generic term referring to an access point in a interconnected system. One type of computer network employs a client/server architecture, wherein the portions of network applications that interact with human users are typically separated from the portions of network applications that process requests and information. Often, the portions of an application that interact with users or access network resources are called client applications or client software, and portions of an application that process requests and information are called server applications or server software. Client machines tend to run client software and server machines tend to run server software, however a server can be a "client" as well. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the user interface would be typically provided on a client machine (which might be any of the user interface alternatives contemplated and exemplified above such as a network computer, stand alone computer, interactive kiosk, etc.) and the software containing the computer instructions which

comprise the methods according to the present invention would be located on a server computer, separate from the client machine.

Fig. 7 schematically illustrates a sample client/server network 35 which might be employed to implement an embodiment of the present invention. As one with ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate, a client/server network is only one type of network, and a variety of other configurations, such as peer-to-peer connections, are also considered networks. In a client/server network, a plurality of nodes are interconnected such that the various nodes send and/or receive information to/from one another. As shown here, a server node (38) is interconnected with a plurality of client nodes (40) using a connection (39) such as a token ring, Ethernet, telephone modem connection, radio or microwave connection, parallel cables, serial cables, telephone lines, universal serial bus "USB", Firewire, Bluetooth, fiber optics, infrared "IR", radio frequency "RF", and the like, or combinations thereof.

A computer-readable medium, shown here as a CD ROM (22), holds information readable by a computer, such as programs, data, files, etc. As will be readily appreciated, computer-readable medium can take a variety of forms, including magnetic storage (such as hard disk drives, floppy diskettes, etc.), optical storage (such as laser discs, compact discs, DVD's, etc.), electronic storage (such as random access memory "RAM", read only memory "ROM", programmable read only memory "PROM", etc.), and the like.

Another aspect of the present invention is a system for the interactive distribution and collection of information relating to products and services. The system comprises one or more interaction terminals 45 in connection with a server 60 and a data store 63. In one embodiment, the interaction terminals 45 further comprise a video camera 46. The server 60 also controls and displays content on the video monitors 41 placed in the sensory magnet zone 35. In another embodiment, the server 60 is also in communication with one or more audio speakers 43 located in the sensory magnet zone 35. In another application, the content of the sensory magnet zone 35 is received by the server 60 from the Internet 65, wherein the content is configured and selected at a remote location. The data store is configured to store interaction data gathered from monitoring the consumer's testing, interaction and purchasing of products. In addition, the data store, compiles the consumer's feedback from interactive surveys, correspondence, follow-up E-mail, direct phone feedback and the like. In another embodiment, a sensory magnet server 85 is in communication with the server 60. The sensory magnet server 85 preferably is in communication with a sensory magnet service provider through a communication link such as the Internet. The sensory magnet

server 85 preferably comprises Enterprise Broadcast Pro from Target Vision or similar products. Preferably, the sensory magnet server can be configured locally or remotely through a communication link.

In another embodiment, the server 60 of the interactive system 20 is in communication with other interactive systems. Preferably, consumers of the various interactive systems can communicate with each other through the communication link between the interactive systems.

In another embodiment of the present invention, the server 60 preferably comprises a proxy server and a text filter. The proxy server stores the Internet sites which are available for the consumer through the user interface. In one embodiment, the proxy server downloads the web sites and periodically rechecks the content to ensure updated information is presented to the consumer, however, the consumer went through the user interface is preferably not directly connected to the Internet. The text filter comprises executable instructions comprising instructions to monitor all screen messages and test inputted by the consumer through one of the interaction terminals, to filter out offensive or derogatory language. Exemplary proxy servers include Microsoft Proxy Server from Microsoft Corporation, Novell BorderManager from Novell Corp. and Netscape Proxy Server from Netscape Communications Corp.

Preferably, one or more e-kiosks 38 are also in communication with the server 60 and the data store 63. The e-kiosk 38 preferably comprises a standalone interactive station which provides product-related information to the consumer. An example illustration of an e-kiosk 48 is shown in Figure 5. In one embodiment, the e-kiosk 48 comprises a video camera, a microphone, a video display and speakers which allow the consumer to communicate with a customer service representative or consultant (real or virtual) at a remote location and allow the consultant to provide consumer information relating to products or services to the consumer. For example, the consumer may establish an interaction with the e-kiosk, in which the e-kiosk will transmit a picture of the consumer taken with the video camera to a consultant at a remote location. The e-kiosk will then establish vocal communication between the consumer and the consultant. The consultant can then provide further customized and personalized product-related information to the consumer. After the consultant has provided the product-related information, the information may be printed on a printer attached to or contained in the e-kiosk. This printout preferably comprises detailed instructions relating to the consultant's instructions for the consumer on products or services of the enterprise.

In another embodiment of the present invention, a cash register or other payment confirmation terminal 55 is located in the retail zone 30 and preferably is in communication with the server 60 and data store 63. It is contemplated that some application of this invention might provide a retail checkout operation without a need for a live attendant. The cash register 55 preferably comprises executable instructions to instruct the cashier (or the payment terminal) to ask the consumer what components of the satellite shop the consumer utilized. Exemplary questions may include: did you use the tester station, did you use the interactive terminals, did you use the e-kiosk, etc. Preferably, the cash register is in communication with the data store, and the feedback data is stored in the data store. In another embodiment of the present invention, a customer service representative can access the data store to determine which areas of the satellite shop enhance purchase decisions and which areas of the satellite shop appear not to enhance the consumer's purchasing decisions.

An optional printer 68 may be connected to the server 60 to allow printing capabilities from one or more of the components of the interactive system. In one embodiment, the printer 68 is located within the retail zone 30, whereby the consumer enters the retail zone 30 to pick up any printout from the interactive terminals 45. The server 60 is preferably in communication with a computer network, such as the Internet 65, to provide communication abilities from the interactive system to other interactive systems at other locations and to access the interactive system from remote locations.

In one embodiment of the present invention, an administrative user 88 may access the data store to utilize, analyze or otherwise apply the purchasing data, consumer feedback data, and testing data to develop or improve products and services of the enterprise and to develop or improve components of the satellite shop. This insight gained from the consumer may provide very beneficial information for the development and improvement of future stores, products and services. It can be contemplated as well, that an enterprise might make its interactive data store results and analysis of the data available to other entities. This might entail allowing such entities to have access to such data via the Internet, via printed reports, via interactive software on computers, periodic data subscription services or the like.

In another embodiment, the step of establishing an interaction with the consumer further comprises the step of providing a user interface in the satellite shop. The user interface is used to collect the consumer identification from the consumer. For example, the consumer may be issued a credit card-type swipe card containing a magnetic stripe, wherein the magnetic stripe contains

information identifying the consumer. The user interface may comprise a magnetic stripe card reader for this purpose. When the consumer establishes an interaction with the user interface (e.g., sweeps their magnetic stripe card through the card reader), the user interface accesses a consumer profile from a data store corresponding to the consumer identification. If no corresponding consumer profile can be identified from the data store, a default consumer profile is generated. The user interface then might preferably provide to the consumer a list of interactive options based at least in part on the consumer's profile. After receiving from the consumer a selective interactive choice, the consumer is provided with the selected interaction choice. A list of interaction options preferably comprises at least one of the following activities: chat with other uses, visit pre-determine web sites, send a message, virtual make over, music director, and video director.

In one embodiment of the present invention as depicted in Figure 8, the user interface allows a consumer to send video E-mail to another person through the Internet. The E-mail preferably comprises a picture or short video of the consumer with attached text. For example, when the consumer chooses the video message option on the user interface, the video camera located adjacent the interactive terminal captures the consumers picture. The consumer can then enter their text message and the E-mail will be send along with the captured image of the consumer. In a preferred embodiment, the video camera captures motion video and sound and the video is then send along with standard text in the E-mail. This feature might allow a consumer to obtain feedback from others on selected products or services, to store the results of their testing experience for later review or sharing, or to compare product results among friends or subsequent tests.

Another embodiment of the present invention allows the consumer to either directly or indirectly control the content of the sensory magnet zone for a period of time. Preferably, the consumer would be allocated a pre-determined amount of minutes per visit to become the "virtual music director" and/or video director at the satellite shop. For example, when the consumer is the music director, she would select which songs to play over the speakers in the sensory magnet zone. Various music streaming programs are available to accomplish this feature such as Shoutcast by Nullsoft. Shoutcast utilizes MP3 files which typically compress the size of music data files while still delivering acceptable content. The MP3 files are then streamed in order of a playlist that is created (by the consumer) through an MP3 player such as WinAmp from Nullsoft. In another embodiment, consumers could choose to listen to the music being streamed at another satellite shop.

Yet another embodiment of the present invention might allow the consumer to similarly operate as the video director for one or more aspects of the sensory magnet zone. The video director functions similarly to the music director, but allows the consumer to select the video information to display on the video monitors in the sensory magnet zone. The video information can also be viewed by other satellite shops and potentially by consumers from a remote site connected by the Internet. One option of the video director as depicted in Figure 9 might include allowing the consumer to display their image on the video monitors at the satellite shop and potentially at the other satellite shops around the world for a selected time period. This would allow a consumer to experience a short period of virtual fame and have their image displayed throughout the sensory magnet zone.

In a consumer products application, the user interface might preferably comprise a kiosk, a computer, a personal digital assistant (PDA), a device with wireless application programs (WAP) such as a cell phone, PDA, interactive TV, or an Internet appliance, or the like. In a preferred embodiment, the consumer interface may comprise a computer system comprising a CPU, memory, a visual display device and an input means. Preferred input means comprise a keyboard, mouse or touch screen or other means of input such as speech recognition and/or visual input utilizing a video camera. In one embodiment, the user interface comprises a computer connected to the Internet through a communication link and running a web browser such as Internet Explorer from Microsoft Corp. or Netscape Navigator from Netscape Communications Corp.

Another aspect of the present invention schematically illustrated in Figure 10 comprises a store for interactive product testing and purchasing. The store comprises a store shell 27, a sensory magnet zone 35, an interactive zone 25, and a retail zone 30. The store shell 27 might preferably comprise an inner area and an outer area, and further wherein the store shell is substantially U-shaped. The sensory magnet zone 35 is located adjacent the outer area of the store shell 27 and it is configured to attract potential customers into the inner area of the store shell 27 through the entrance 24. The interactive zone 25 is preferably located within the inner area of the store shell 27 and is adjacent the sensory magnet zone 35. The retail zone 30 is preferably located within the inner area of the store shell 27. The sensory magnet zone 35 preferably is configured to provided product-related information to the consumer and further preferably comprises video advertisements, still shot advertisements or demonstration videos. The interactive zone 25 of the satellite store 22 comprises one or more components selected from the group consisting of a product tester 48, an e-kiosk 38 and an interaction terminal 35. While any design of the satellite store could be applied

under appropriate circumstances, the generally U-shaped overall configuration with limited ingress and egress might be preferred where products for retail purchase are included as part of the retail zone. Such a generally controlled traffic flow design would be more conducive to product safety and security against shoplifting, especially where the store is unattended or lightly staffed.

The foregoing description of the various embodiments of the invention has been presented for the purposes of illustration and description, is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed. Many alternatives, modifications, and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art of the above teaching. For example, it is contemplated that any of a wide variety of products or services could equally be substituted for the beauty care products discussed in the examples above, including but not limited to other consumer products such as cleaning products of all kinds, food products, beverage products, electronics, appliances, hardware supplies, tools, etc., while it is believed that the present invention may be more valuable in conjunction with products and services which are needed and purchased by any particular consumer on an ongoing basis, it is contemplated that the invention is applicable to any product or service. Accordingly, this invention is intended to embrace all alternatives, modifications, and variations that have been discussed herein, and others that fall within the spirit and scope of the claims.

What is claimed:

1. An interactive system for conducting business comprising:

a satellite shop located in an area of high pedestrian traffic;

a sensory magnet zone comprising at least one stimulus to attract consumers to the satellite shop;

an interactive zone of the satellite shop comprising a consumer interface configured to facilitate exchange of product-related information and a product testing zone; and

a retail zone within the satellite shop comprising products available for purchase.

2. The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the satellite shop is located adjacent one or more walk-in shops.

3. The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the satellite shop is located substantially within an existing retail store.

4. The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the interactive zone comprises one or more components selected from the group consisting of a product tester, an e-kiosk, and an Internet appliance.

5. The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the sensory magnet zone comprises at least one video monitor, wherein the video monitor displays product information, consumer-oriented information or entertainment.

6. The interactive system of claim 5, wherein the product information comprises video advertisements, still-shot advertisements or demonstration videos.

7. The interactive system of claim 5, wherein the consumer-oriented information comprises music videos or entertainment.

8. The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the sensory magnet zone is located adjacent the interactive zone and retail zone.

9. The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the interactive zone is configured to provide incentives to encourage testing of products.

10. The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the interactive zone is configured to provide coupons or discounts towards purchase of the products tested by the consumer.

11. The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the consumer interface and product testing zone are in communication with a data store, and further wherein the data store is configured to store the consumer's interactions with the product testing zone and consumer interface.

12. The interactive system of claim 11, wherein the consumer interface is configured to allow the consumer to access the stored consumer's interactions from a remote location.

13. The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the interactive zone is configured to collect information from the consumer or suggest products to the consumer.

14. The interactive system of claim 1, further comprising a data store, wherein the data store is in communication with the interactive zone and further wherein the data store is configured to record a consumer's interaction with the interaction zone.

15. The interactive system of claim 14, wherein the data store records a list of products tested by the consumer.

16. The interactive system of claim 15, wherein the data store records a list of products purchased by the consumer.

17. The interactive system of claim 14, further comprising an administrative user interface in communication with the data store, wherein the administrative user interface comprises executable instructions for accessing consumer interaction data.

18. A method of interacting with a consumer to provide product-related information comprising the steps of:

locally attracting the consumer to a satellite shop;

establishing an interaction with the consumer via a product related interface;

providing product related information to the consumer via the product related interface;

providing the consumer an opportunity to test at least one product;

recording a list of products tested by the consumer in a data store;

offering to the consumer one or more products for purchase; and

obtaining feedback from the consumer regarding the purchased products and tested products.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of obtaining feedback comprises sending the consumer an electronic message containing at least one product-related question.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the list of products tested by the consumer is accessible to the consumer for later reference.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of attracting the consumer comprises displaying consumer-oriented information on video monitors, and further wherein the video monitors are placed adjacent the shop to attract the consumer's attention towards the shop.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of establishing an interaction with the consumer comprises providing consumer-oriented and product-related information through a user interaction terminal.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the product-related information comprises video advertisements, still-shot advertisements or demonstration videos.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein the consumer-oriented information comprises music videos or entertainment.

25. The method of claim 22, wherein the user interaction terminal comprises a computer.

26. The method of claim 22, wherein the user interaction terminal comprises an interactive workstation.

27. The method of claim 22, wherein the user interaction terminal comprises an e-kiosk.

28. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of providing the consumer an opportunity to test at least one product further comprises providing the consumer with a testing station comprising at least one product the consumer may test, and wherein the testing station is in communication with a computer and a data store.

29. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of establishing an interaction with the consumer further comprises the steps of:

providing a user interface;

collecting a consumer identification from the consumer;

accessing a consumer profile from a data store corresponding to the consumer identification;

providing to the consumer a list of interaction options;

receiving from the consumer a selected interaction choice; and

providing the consumer with the selected interaction choice.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the list of interaction options comprises at least one of the following activities: chat with other consumers, visit pre-determined web sites, send a message, virtual make over, music director, and video director.

31. A store for interactive product testing and purchasing comprising:

a store shell, wherein the store shell comprises an inner area and an outer area, and further wherein the store shell is substantially U-shaped;

a sensory magnet zone, wherein the sensory magnet zone is located adjacent the outer area of the store shell and is configured to attract potential customers into the inner area of the store shell;

an interactive zone, wherein the interactive zone is located within the inner area of the store shell and adjacent the sensory magnet zone; and

a retail zone, wherein the retail zone is located within the inner area of the store shell.

32. The store of claim 31, wherein the sensory magnet zone is configured to provide product-related information to the consumer, and further comprises video advertisements, still-shot advertisements or demonstration videos.

33. The store of claim 31, wherein the retail zone comprises products available for purchase.

34. The store of claim 31, wherein the interactive zone comprises one or more components selected from the group consisting of a product tester, an e-kiosk, and an interaction terminal.

35. The store of claim 34, wherein the e-kiosk is configured to provide real time video consultations to a consumer.

36. The store of claim 34, wherein the interaction terminal is configured to provide pre-determined Internet web sites, product-information, Messaging capability, or control of the sensory magnet zone content.

37. The store of claim 36, further comprising one or more video cameras connected to the interaction terminal, wherein the video cameras are configured to display video on the video monitors.

38. The store of claim 31, further comprising a data store, wherein the data store is in communication with the interactive zone and further wherein the data store is configured to record a consumer's interaction with the interactive zone.

39. The store of claim 38, wherein the data store records a list of products tested by the consumer.

40. The store of claim 38, wherein the data store records a list of products purchased by the consumer.

41. The store of claim 31, further comprising an administrative user interface in communication with the data store, wherein the administrative user interface comprises executable instructions for accessing consumer interaction data.

42. An interactive system for conducting business comprising:

a satellite shop located in an area of high pedestrian traffic;

a sensory magnet zone comprising at least one stimulus to attract consumers to the satellite shop;

an interactive zone of the satellite shop comprising a consumer interface configured to facilitate exchange of product-related information and a product testing zone;

a retail zone within the satellite shop comprising products available for purchase; and

a data store in communication with the interactive testing zone, wherein the data store is configured to record a consumer's interaction with the interactive zone.

43. The interactive system of claim 42, wherein the data store is in communication with the retail zone.

44. The interactive system of claim 42, further comprising an administrative user interface in communication with the data store, wherein the administrative user interface comprises executable instructions for accessing consumer interaction data.

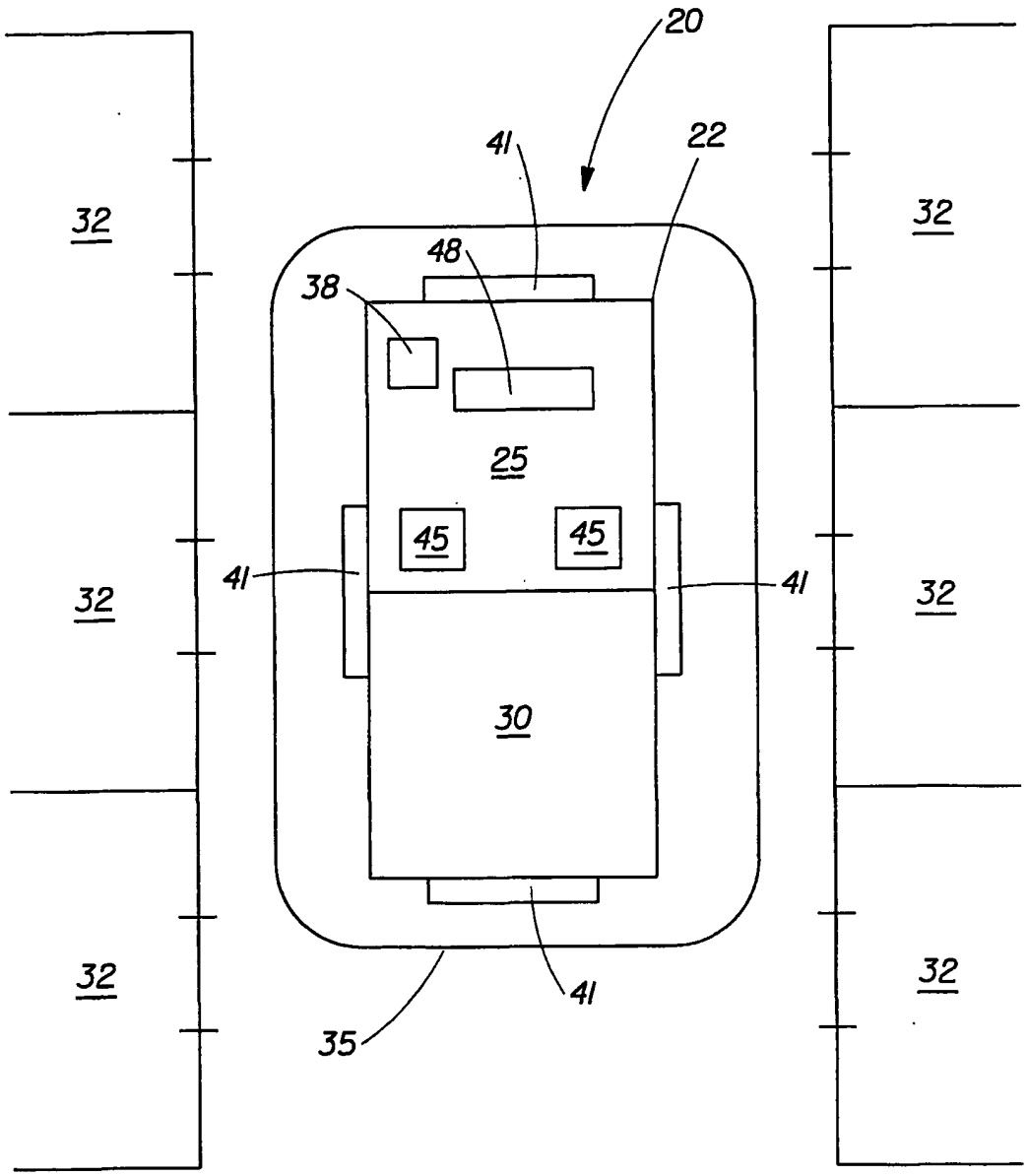

Fig. 1

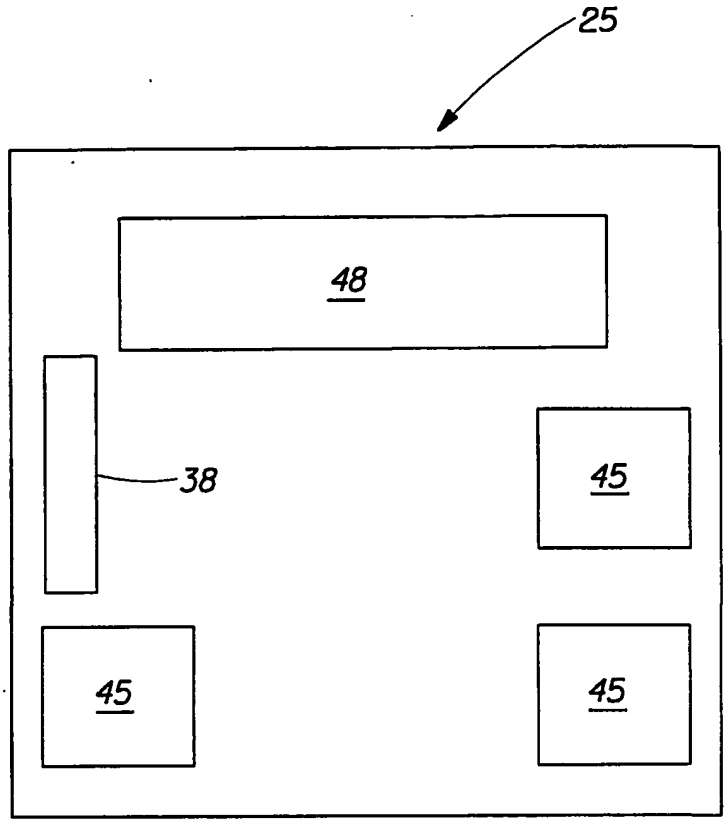

Fig. 2

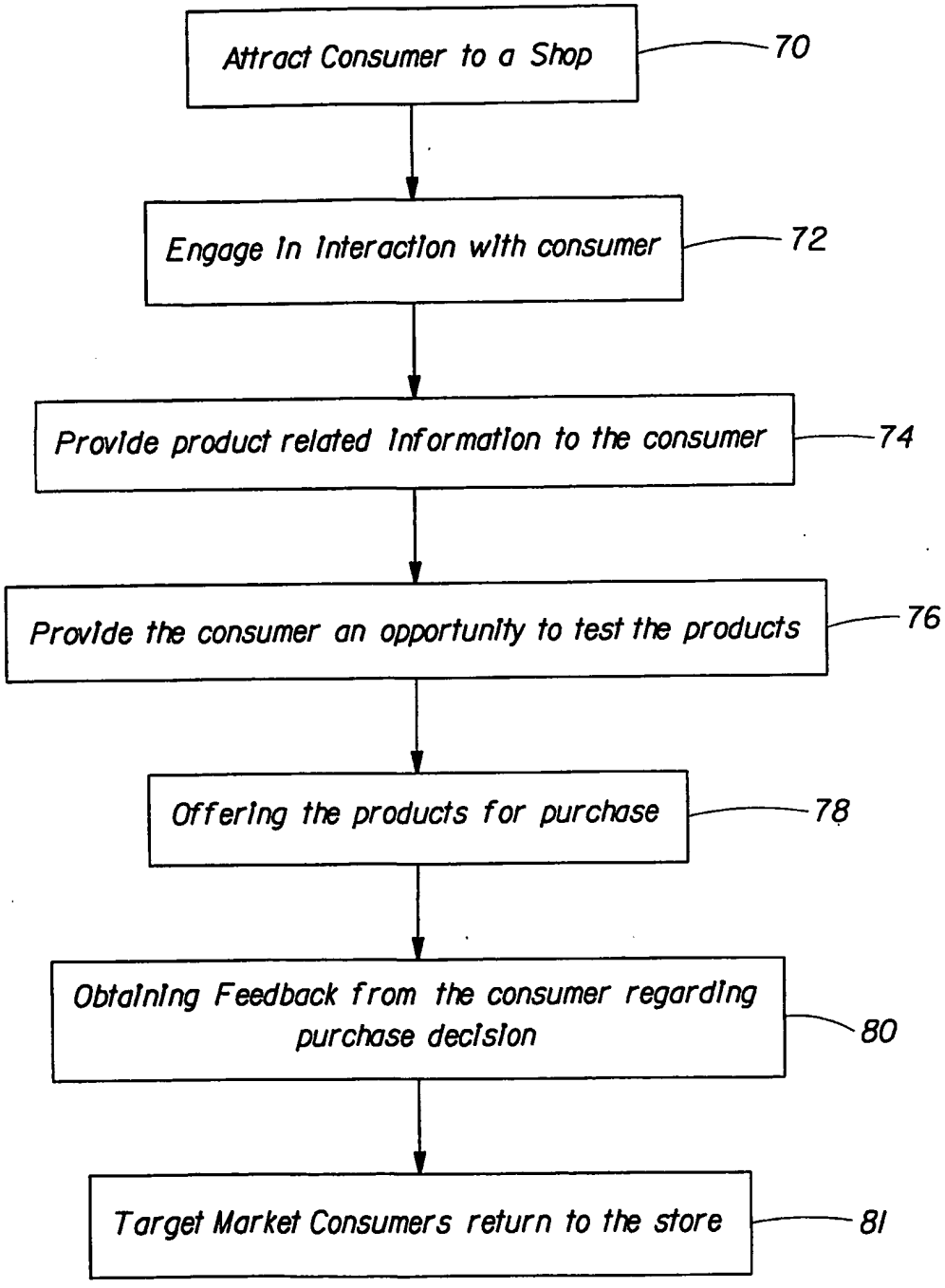
Attract Consumer to a Shop
70
Engage In Interaction with consumer
72
Provide product related Information to the consumer
74
Provide the consumer an opportunity to test the products
76
Offering the products for purchase
78
Obtaining Feedback from the consumer regarding purchase decision
80
Target Market Consumers return to the store
81

Fig. 3

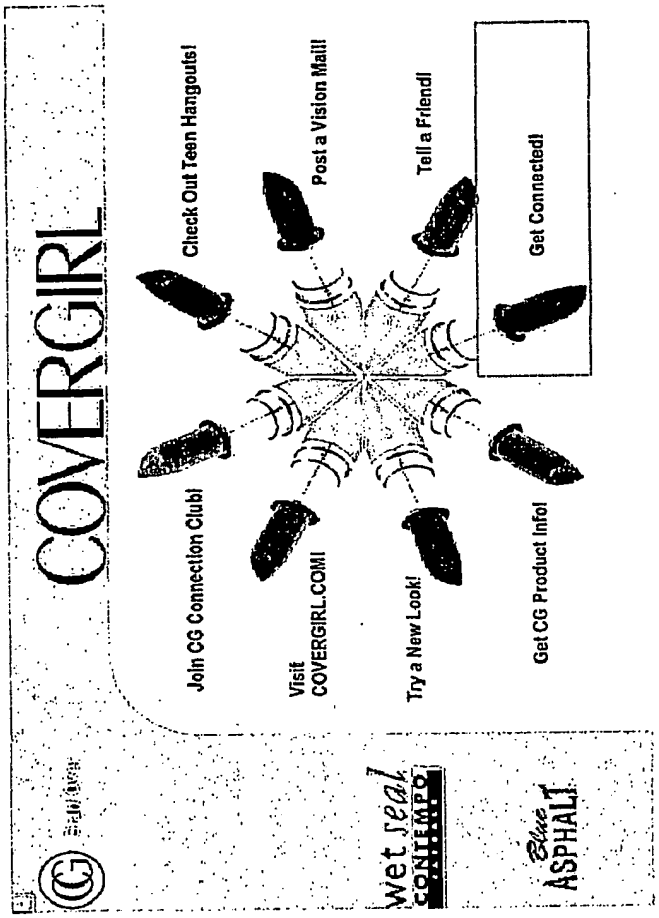
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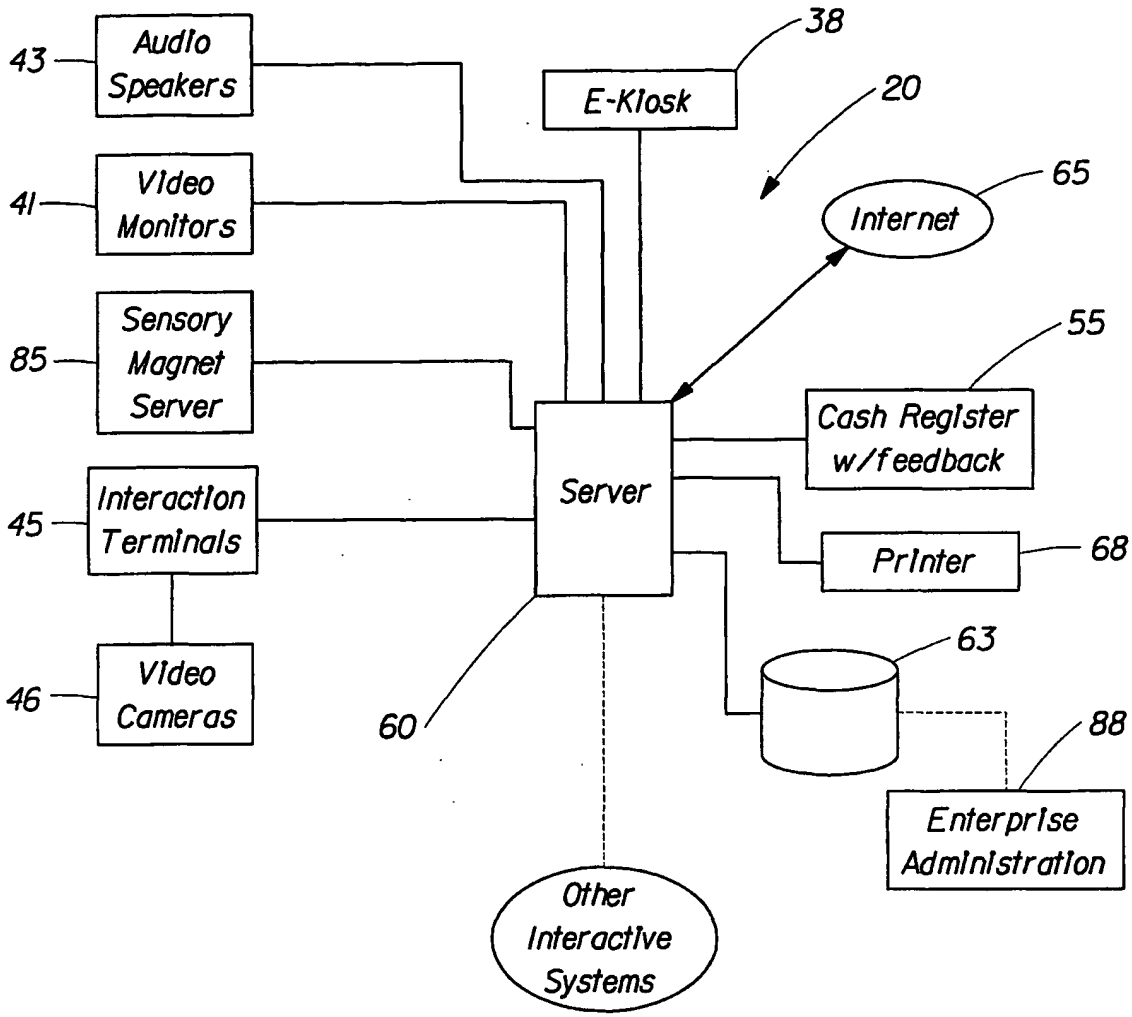
Fig. 4

Fig. 5


43
Audio Speakers
41
Video Monitors
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Sensory Magnet Server
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Interaction Terminals
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Video Cameras
38
E-Kiosk
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Internet
55
Cash Register w/feedback
Server
Printer
68
63
88
Enterprise Administration
60
Other Interactive Systems

Fig. 6

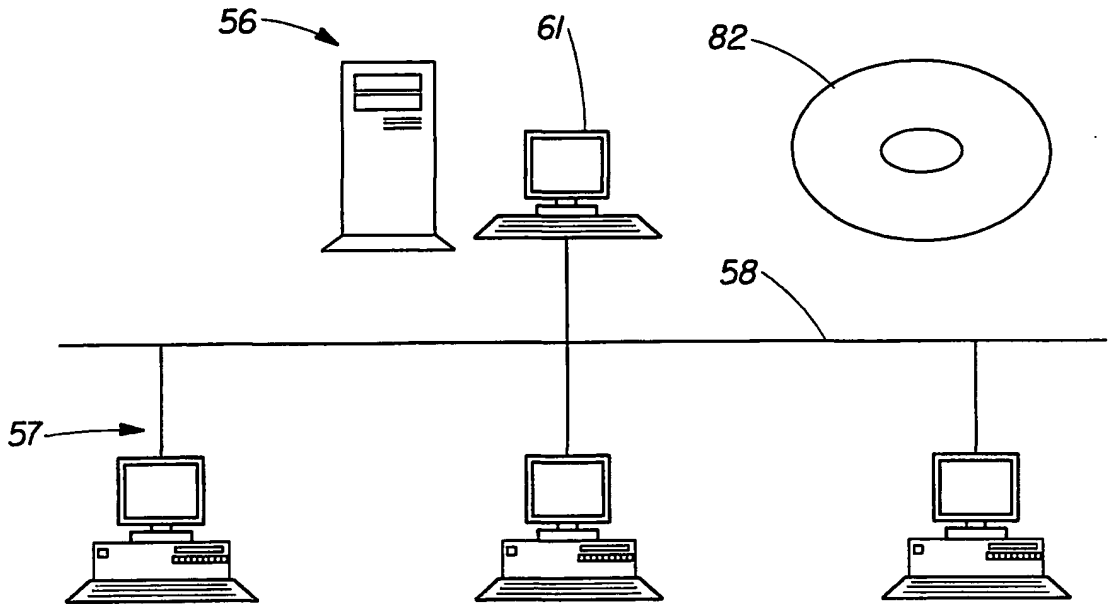
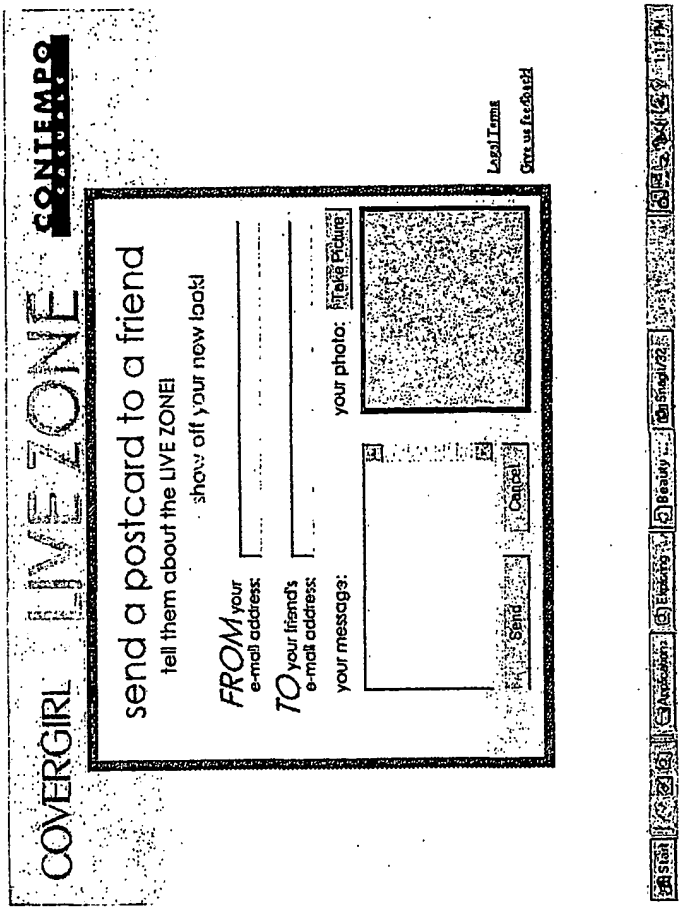


Fig. 7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TO your friend's e-mail address:
your message:
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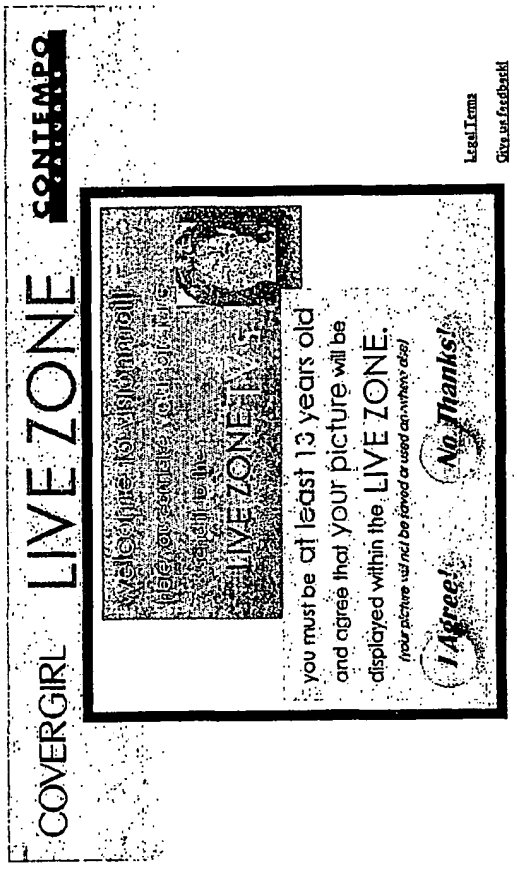
Fig. 8


COVERGIRL
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you must be at least 13 years old
and agree that your picture will be
displayed within the LIVE ZONE.
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Fig. 9

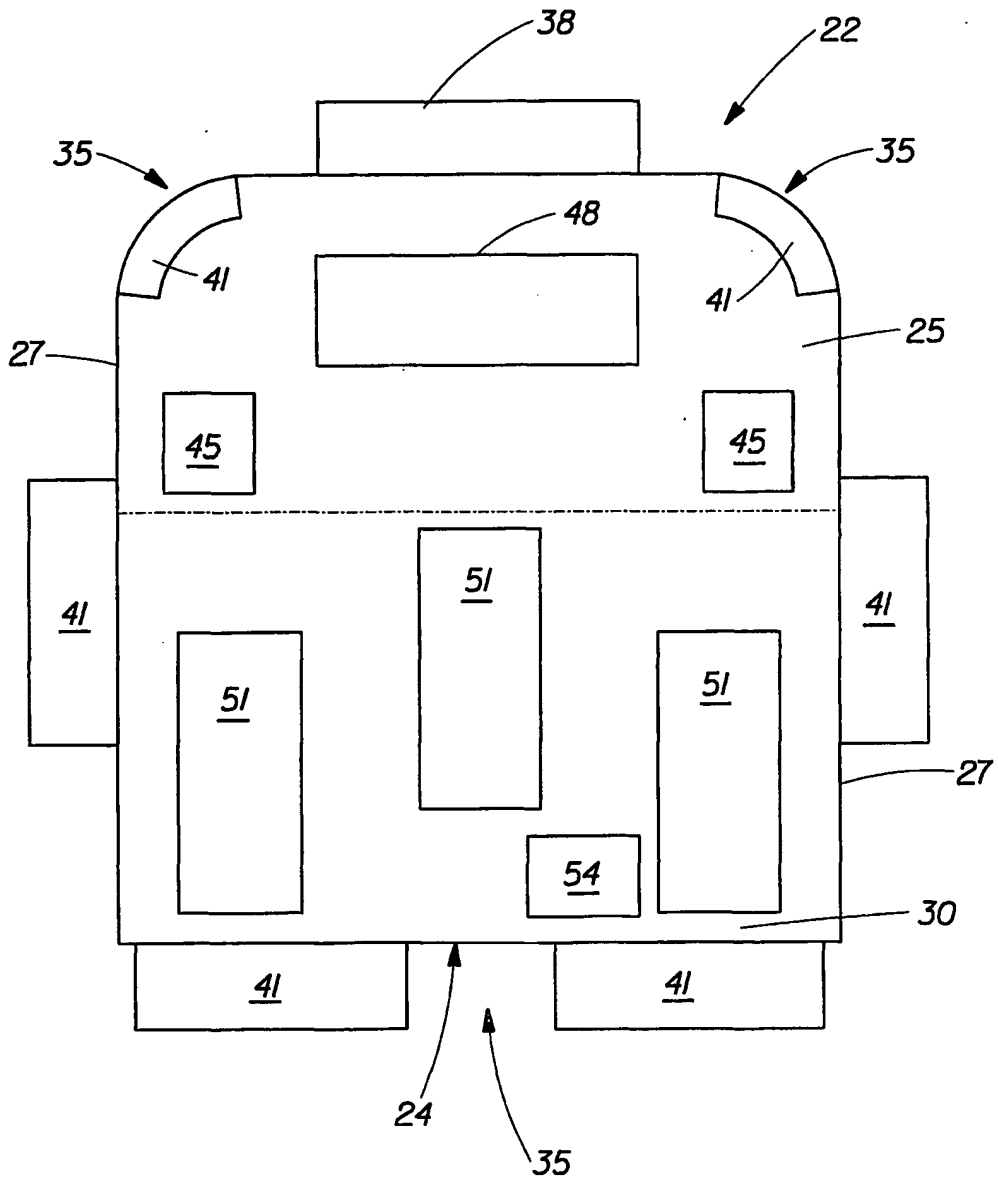

Fig. 10

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

DECLARATION OF NON-ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 17(2)(a), Rules 13ter.1(c) and Rule 39)

Applicant's or agent's file reference	IMPORTANT DECLARATION	Date of mailing *(day/month/year)*
8062/VB		01/10/2001
International application No.	International filing date *(day/month/year)*	(Earliest) Priority date *(day/month/year)*
PCT/US 01/ 11659	09/04/2001	14/04/2000
International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC	G06F17/60	
Applicant		
THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY		

This International Searching Authority hereby declares, according to Article 17(2)(a), that **no international search report will be established** on the international application for the reasons indicated below

1. ☐ The subject matter of the international application relates to:
   - a. ☐ scientific theories.
   - b. ☐ mathematical theories
   - c. ☐ plant varieties.
   - d. ☐ animal varieties.
   - e. ☐ essentially biological processes for the production of plants and animals, other than microbiological processes and the products of such processes.
   - f. ☐ schemes, rules or methods of doing business.
   - g. ☐ schemes, rules or methods of performing purely mental acts.
   - h. ☐ schemes, rules or methods of playing games.
   - i. ☐ methods for treatment of the human body by surgery or therapy.
   - j. ☐ methods for treatment of the animal body by surgery or therapy.
   - k. ☐ diagnostic methods practised on the human or animal body.
   - l. ☐ mere presentations of information.
   - m. ☐ computer programs for which this International Searching Authority is not equipped to search prior art.

2. ☒ The failure of the following parts of the international application to comply with prescribed requirements prevents a meaningful search from being carried out:
   ☐ the description ☒ the claims ☐ the drawings

3. ☐ The failure of the nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence listing to comply with the standard provided for in Annex C of the Administrative Instructions prevents a meaningful search from being carried out:
   - ☐ the written form has not been furnished or does not comply with the standard.
   - ☐ the computer readable form has not been furnished or does not comply with the standard.

4. Further comments: see further information sheet

Name and mailing address of the International Searching Authority	Authorized officer
European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL-2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Roger Thomas

Form PCT/ISA/203 (July 1998)

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 203

The claims relate to subject matter for which no search is required according to Rule 39 PCT. Given that the claims are formulated in terms of such subject matter or merely specify commonplace features relating to its technological implementation, the search examiner could not establish any technical problem which might potentially have required an inventive step to overcome. Hence it was not possible to carry out a meaningful search into the state of the art (Art. 17(2)(a)(i) and (ii) PCT).

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that claims relating to inventions in respect of which no international search report has been established need not be the subject of an international preliminary examination (Rule 66.1(e) PCT). The applicant is advised that the EPO policy when acting as an International Preliminary Examining Authority is normally not to carry out a preliminary examination on matter which has not been searched. This is the case irrespective of whether or not the claims are amended following receipt of the search report or during any Chapter II procedure. If the application proceeds into the regional phase before the EPO, the applicant is reminded that a search may be carried out during examination before the EPO (see EPO Guideline C-VI, 8.5), should the problems which led to the Article 17(2) declaration be overcome.